

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Burma/Myanmar**

The EU welcomes the initial contacts that have taken place between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi, Secretary-General of the National League for Democracy (NLD). The Union considers these developments to be the most interesting since 1990. They need to be encouraged.

At the same time, the EU notes that the political situation in Burma/Myanmar remains worrying. It emphasises the need for concrete measures leading to national reconciliation, democracy and the respect of human rights, in line with the EU's common position and the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. The EU sincerely hopes that the confidential contacts that have started between the SPDC and NLD will lead to real progress in all these areas. The EU stands ready to support further developments in these contacts. The EU also welcomes the recent release from detention of a number of opposition activists.

The EU reiterates its strong support for the efforts of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy Tan Sri Razali Ismail, upon whom the Troika called in connection with its mission to Rangoon/Yangon.

The European Union welcomes the contacts that its Troika mission had with all the parties during its visit to Burma/Myanmar from 28 to 31 January.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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